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ECUADOR

Disability Plan

Ecuador has a population of about 13,890,000; approximately 13% of the population has some type of disability. Fortunately, Ecuador has a strong legal framework on this subject, starting with a Constitution that specifically addresses the topic of disability rights, to laws and regulations such as the Disability Act, the Regulations on the Registration of Persons with Disabilities, the Childhood and Adolescence Code, and the Labor Code. Unfortunately, poverty, social and architectural barriers, neglect, high levels of unemployment, and lack of access to training and education are just a few of the many obstacles that persons with disabilities must still overcome.¹

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to pursuing advocacy for, outreach to, and inclusion of persons with disabilities, to the maximum extent feasible in the design and implementation of its programs. A disability is defined as physical or mental impairment that affects a major life function.

In 1997, the Agency developed the “USAID Policy Paper on Disability”² to describe the importance of considering concerns of the persons with disabilities within ongoing and future programs. USAID/Ecuador developed this Disability Plan to support USAID’s policy and articulate the programmatic approach to disability and to integrate issues of equity towards disadvantaged groups (including women and persons with disabilities). The Plan provides a simple and brief outline of steps the Mission will take to strengthen its programming to be accessible to and utilized by persons with disabilities. This commitment extends from the design and implementation of USAID programming to advocacy for and outreach to persons with disabilities.

USAID/Ecuador will carry out the procedures contained in this Plan within the framework of the foreign assistance programs implemented in Ecuador and described in the Mission’s annual operational plan³.

Operational Procedures

USAID/Ecuador supports the four objectives of the Agency’s Policy Paper on Disability as follows:

Objective 1: To enhance the attainment of U.S. foreign assistance program goals by promoting the participation and equalization of opportunities of individuals with disabilities in USAID policy, country and sector strategies, activity designs and implementation.

- USAID/Ecuador shall promote policies, practices and procedures to guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, and to empower individual with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society. This is achieved through activities that are specifically designed to assist persons with disabilities and also by incorporating their needs and rights into other programs.
- USAID/Ecuador and its implementing partners shall consider the concerns of persons with disabilities in all applicable programs, starting with the design through the implementation and ending in the final evaluation. Some examples for the inclusion of this group are, but are not limited to, the development of

¹ For more information about persons with disabilities in Ecuador visit <http://www.conadis.gov.ec/>

² USAID’s Policy Paper on Disability is available at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability

³ For more information on USAID/Ecuador’s programs visit <http://ecuador.usaid.gov/portal/>

accessible basic infrastructure (roads, water and sanitation systems, etc), urban and rural community development, health care facilities or systems, formal and non-formal education, training, human rights initiatives, productive activities, etc.

Objective 2: To increase awareness of issues of persons with disabilities both within USAID programs and in host countries.

- USAID/Ecuador will distribute copies of this Plan to its staff and partners.
- USAID/Ecuador Contracting and Agreement Officers will include a provision supporting USAID's Disability Policy in all solicitations and current grants, cooperative agreements and contracts. The provision is an affirmative statement that the contractor or recipient will comply, to the extent practicable and within the scope of the award, with the intent of USAID's Policy Paper on Disability⁴.
- USAID/Ecuador will require awardees to comply with standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities in all structures, buildings or facilities resulting from new or renovation construction or alterations of an existing structure⁵.
- USAID/Ecuador will sensitize its staff and partners to the current status of disabilities in Ecuador and encourage the identification of “windows of opportunity” in every program.
- USAID/Ecuador will encourage its staff to take the e-learning course “Inclusive Development”⁶ to help with implementation of USAID's Disability Policy.
- USAID/Ecuador will provide information for the Disability Report prepared by USAID/Washington, including the status of disabilities in Ecuador, current activities in this area, number of persons with disabilities included in the programs, lessons learned, opportunities, challenges for future programming and any other relevant information. For this purpose, USAID/Ecuador will require grantees and contractors to report on their progress in integrating the concerns of persons with disabilities into USAID-funded activities as part of the Portfolio Reviews and Performance Report.
- USAID/Ecuador will highlight specific “success stories” at individual or organizational level to disseminate local experiences in promoting inclusion and accessibility.

Objective 3: To engage other U.S. government agencies, host country counterparts, governments, implementing organizations and other donors in fostering a climate of nondiscrimination against persons with disabilities.

- USAID/Ecuador will respond to requests for concept papers from USAID/Washington, the Department of State, and other USG agencies in order to expand support for persons with disabilities.
- USAID/Ecuador will look to an increasing role for local NGOs to carry out service delivery and to advocate on behalf of the interests of persons with disabilities. USAID/Ecuador will encourage the formation of effective partnership relations between U.S. PVOs, local NGOs, private sector, Government of Ecuador institutions and other donors interested in issues of concern to persons with disabilities.
- USAID/Ecuador will participate in Agency and donor meetings on inclusion of disabilities issues.

⁴ Supporting USAID's Disability Policy in Contracts, Grants, and Cooperative Agreements is in www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/

⁵ USAID Policy on Standards for Accessibility for the Disabled in USAID-financed Construction is in www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/construction_waiver.html

⁶ E-learning course “Inclusive Development” at <http://university.usaid.gov> is available only for USAID staff.

- USAID/Ecuador will include events related to persons with disabilities in the Ambassador's agenda to help raise visibility within and outside the USG.

Objective 4: To support international advocacy for people with disabilities.

- USAID/Ecuador will look for opportunities to participate in events regarding disabilities; for example, during the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3rd). USAID will also encourage the participation of local NGOs representatives in key events regarding disabilities that will bring new knowledge and lessons learned to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development activities. USAID/Ecuador will consider financing the attendance of the participants, if funds are available.